

VISIT | **DURANGO**
C O L O R A D O



2019 Press Kit



Old West Heritage

Incorporated in 1881, the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad founded Durango to supply miners working in the San Juan Mining District. The narrow gauge railway extension connects the mountain towns of Durango and Silverton, and has traveled the 45-mile route (one way) continuously for over 135 years. The [Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad](#) (D&SNGRR) is a Registered Historical Landmark by the National Park Service serving thousands of travelers every year. Visitors can board the historic 1880's Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad (D&SNGRR) for breathtaking views of the rugged [San Juan National Forest](#) and old-world atmosphere.

The D&SNGRR offers year-round service to and from Silverton (May through November), or Cascade Canyon in the winter, the D&SNGRR includes specially themed event trains. 2019 events include D&SNGRR Brew Train, Wine & Rails, Cowboy Poetry Train and the famed Polar Express™ Train.

New for summer 2019, the D&SNGRR introduces the Cascade Canyon Express summer train ride. Perfect for families with small children or anyone with limited time to spare, the diesel-powered train departs from Rockwood Station and takes just two hours round trip. Despite being the shortest, most affordable option, the Cascade Canyon Express offers big payoffs in iconic canyon views along the highline, incredible geological features and pristine wilderness inaccessible by any roads. Use the extra time to explore Durango's historic district or boundless outdoor recreation with over 300-miles of trails within 30-minutes of downtown.

Riders board the train at Rockwood Station and journey roundtrip to Cascade Canyon through the steep mountain canyons and high mountain curves of the pristine San Juan National Forest. Seating choices include traveling in a historic restoration coach or an open-air gondola. The Cascade Canyon Express is available June 17th - August 14th, Monday through Wednesdays.

Archeological Center of North America



Visitors can experience the archeological wonders and ancient cave dwellings at nearby UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including [Mesa Verde National Park](#), [Aztec Ruins National Monument](#) and [Chaco Canyon](#), all within an easy day trip of Durango. West of Durango, Mesa Verde Country allows visitors to experience the life of the Ancestral Puebloans.

Mesa Verde Country is known for its archaeology, agriculture and adventure. Two national scenic byways – the San Juan and Trail of the Ancients – pass through Mesa Verde Country. The area is also an archaeological hub, featuring the majestic Mesa Verde National Park, and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The culinary scene featuring local farm produce, ingredients and beverages, and superb restaurants making these towns a hidden gem for visitors.

Ancient Pueblo ruins and artifacts dating back over 2500 years were discovered in the San Juan Basin in the 1880's. Visitors can explore Mesa Verde National Park, the Ute Mountain Tribal Park, Hovenweep National Monument, the Anasazi Heritage Center and Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, or head east to the newly designated Chimney Rock National Monument. The Canyons of the Ancients National Monument features a rugged and breathtaking 176,000-acre landscape that contains the highest known density of archaeological sites in the U.S. The [Lowry Pueblo](#) is the only developed recreation site within the monument, featuring 40 rooms, eight kivas and a Great Kiva.

Crow Canyon reconstructs the centuries-long history of the Pueblo Indians through long-term, multidisciplinary research in the American Southwest, with a special emphasis on the Mesa Verde region. Crow Canyon offers education programs in which students—fourth grade through college-level and lifelong adult learners—learn about archaeology and Pueblo Indian history, the scientific process, and the complex interactions between people and their environment.

Mesa Verde ranger-led tour tickets and merchandise are exclusively sold outside of the park at the Durango Welcome Center in downtown Durango. This provides an incredible value-added service to visitors, saving time and ensuring tickets are secured before arriving at Mesa Verde NP.



Great American Road Trip

The **San Juan Skyway Scenic and Historic Byway** travels from Durango and Telluride, to Mesa Verde National Park and back to Durango. The San Juan Byway is a 236-mile loop that winds through dramatic scenery in the shadow of 14,000 foot peaks, including the “Million Dollar Highway” segment from Silverton to Ouray, known as one of the [most scenic drives](#) in America.

Colorado’s newest Scenic and Historic Byway, Tracks Across Borders is a richly layered journey through two states spanning southwest Colorado and northern New Mexico. From the romance of the rails and living Native American culture, to breathtaking scenery and endless outdoor recreation, the 125-mile route traces the narrow gauge right-of-way of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, connecting over 800 years of Colorado history.

Tracks Across Borders tells one of Colorado’s greatest stories: the creation and development of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, the state’s first, and ultimately the nation’s largest, narrow gauge railroad system. Once connected via the railroad, Durango, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico serve as gateway cities linking the two National Historic Landmarks.

From the sweeping San Juan Mountains and mesa panoramas to wild, lush riparian ecosystems along the San Juan and Navajo Rivers, the Tracks Across Borders Byway accesses one of Colorado’s least traveled regions. The route offers many unique Colorado stories related to the railroad, and Native American and Hispanic culture and prehistory. Along the way dozens of opportunities beckon travelers to get out of the car and enjoy recreational activities for every age, interest and ability level, including biking, hiking, climbing, jeep tours, fishing, river sports, winter sports, lake activities, and more.



Arts & Cultural Establishments

Downtown Durango is on the National Register of Historic Districts and overflows with historic hotels, award-winning restaurants, art galleries and boutique shopping. Durango's [thriving art scene](#) showcases contemporary and Native American artists, and over a dozen art galleries from small, local art cooperatives to world-famous works. A walk down historic Main Avenue reveals over a dozen award-winning art galleries, museums and cultural attractions, including the Durango Arts Center, Durango & Silverton Railroad Museum, Animas Museum, Powerhouse Science Center, and the Durango Fish Hatchery & Wildlife Museum. Visit the Southern Ute Museum or the Center for Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College to gain an understanding of the ancient peoples of the region, and the importance of preserving these cultural resources.

The 12,000-square-foot D&SNG Railroad Museum is tucked in the back of the rail yard, featuring ever-changing exhibits and artifacts that tell the history of railroading, especially on the D&RGW line. Permanent displays include lanterns, locks & keys, photographs, paintings and many of the tools of railroading. Steam locomotives, railroad cars and other equipment dating back to the 1880s are available to see up-close. Pre-arranged, guided tours are offered during business hours. Admission and tours are free, and offered year-round.

In September 2019, the 25th Annual [Durango Autumn Arts Festival](#) is a benefit event for the [Durango Arts Center](#), the region's premiere non-profit arts organization serving Durango and the Four Corners. The festival is a well-loved and attended community event attracting upwards of 7,600 visitors to stroll the 100 fine arts and craft booths, live entertainment on the main stage, local food booths and a children's Creation Station for family friendly activities. The Durango Autumn Arts Festival is a juried show, with the top artists selected out of a pool of over 200 applicants. Entry is free. More information can be found at www.durangoarts.org/daaf/. Hours 10am - 5pm.



Introducing New Culinary Offerings

Despite its off the beaten path location and lack of traffic, escaping to Durango's surrounding high desert and mountains does not mean sacrificing metropolitan tastes and flavors. Farm agritourism tours, craft breweries and local culinary products highlight a visit to Durango. With over 100 award-winning restaurants to choose from, Durango is a culinary hotspot where the food scene is constantly evolving, including the addition of several new culinary offerings in 2019.

A Durango staple since 2001, **Bread** bakery now occupies a second location in downtown Durango. A morning hotspot for cyclists and foodies alike, Bread makes fresh homemade breads, pastries, cookies, and deli sandwiches in-house daily at its flagship location on CR 250.

Durango continues to redefine "fast food" with **Bird's rotisserie** neighborhood restaurant and tavern. Featuring fast-casual foods and beverages with a focus on healthy foods, chicken is prepared using a specialty rotisserie grill from France as the central part of the menu.

The new **Nugget Mountain Bar** is the place to be for après ski, hike and bike enthusiasts. Located one half mile south of Purgatory Resort, the renovated historic D-Log cabin features a full bar, gourmet food, incredible views, and a cozy atmosphere.

Coming June 2019, **Primus Restaurant** brings fresh seafood and wild game to downtown's eclectic culinary scene, paired with an artfully curated wine list and seasonal or classic cocktails. Primus spotlights locally sourced produce and grains combined in thoughtfully prepared meals.

Down the Rabbit Hole brings people together for great food, drinks and fun with its "Alice and Wonderland" themed decor. Patrons choose from seating on couches, themed tables and over 70 board games provides fun for the whole family.



High Desert Meets the Mountains

Nestled in southwestern Colorado's Animas River Valley and surrounded by rugged peaks, Durango offers more than 300-miles of world-class mountain biking and hiking within 30-minutes of downtown. The [San Juan National Forest](#) includes the largest wilderness area in Colorado – the **Weminuche Wilderness** – and hundreds of miles of singletrack, world class mountain biking, epic rock climbing and backcountry skiing, plus fly fishing and boating on the gold medal waters of the Animas River. West of Durango, discover the spectacular **La Plata Canyon** and its beautiful U formation created by glaciers with abundant wildlife, wildflowers, high-alpine meadows, and avalanche gullies.

Visitors can go remote backpacking, rafting or enjoy an extensive network of trails within five minutes of downtown Durango, including the [Animas River Trail](#) (ART). The centerpiece of the city's trail system, the ART is a paved multi-use trail stretching nearly 7 miles through Durango's Animas River Greenway. The ART provides easy access to a variety of parks; open spaces and natural surface trails, the community recreation center, the public library, downtown Durango, neighborhoods and schools.

The **Durango Double Trail Run & MTB Ride** is an annual trail running and mountain biking event taking place Oct. 12th, and includes the Horse Gulch Hustle, a tough and scenic 10.8-mile trail run (the first leg of the Double, but can be done as a standalone event). The Durango Double follows the run with a 17-mile mountain bike ride (solo or two person team), 5K run, and Kids Mini Double. Enjoy live music and take in the fall colors on the Animas River with local food and libations.

All of Durango's trails are built and maintained by local nonprofit trails group, Trails 2000, which hosts an interactive trail map, trail descriptions and trail conditions report online at [Trails2000.org](https://trails2000.org).

Pedal Durango



Rated a Gold Level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists, Durango will host over 30 cycling events in 2019, including the famed [Iron Horse Bicycle Classic](#), the second longest continuously run cycling event in the United States. Cycling enthusiasts can get in on the action with a variety of events taking place nearly every week throughout the summer, including criteriums, circuit races, road races, tours, BMX races, trials, dual slaloms, team trail rides, training camps, mountain bike races, and more.

A mecca for all forms of cycling and mountain biking, Durango offers some of the best riding in North America. Access to trails, good weather and a bike friendly community are just a few reasons many cycling celebrities call Durango home, including World Champion Ned Overend, Carmen Small and American Olympians, Travis Brown, Ruthie Mathes, Todd Wells, and Howard Grotts. For those looking to explore Durango and the San Juan Mountains by bicycle, the following offers sample itineraries appealing to a full range of bike friendly activities.

Road Cycling - Highway 550

This 50-mile section of asphalt cuts through jaw-dropping scenery to the historic town of Silverton. After climbing 6,500 feet over two mountain passes exceeding elevations of 10,000 feet, kickback in an open-air gondola on the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad for the return.

In Town Trails

Durango offers over 300 miles of trails within 30 minutes of downtown, from buttery smooth singletrack and technical climbs, endless county roads, BMX, pump tracks, and downhill flow trails.

The Colorado Trail – Kennebec Pass

Enjoy high mountain riding following the last 22 miles of the Colorado Trail from Kennebec Pass to Durango. The 5,000-foot descent offers three glorious hours of riding through pine and aspen forests along some of the state's sweetest singletrack. [Shuttles available](#) from Durango, starting in May.



Gold Medal Waters

With its high mountain creeks, clear streams, lakes, and fantastic rivers, Durango is one of Colorado's top destinations for fishing and boating. Flowing right through Durango, enjoy rafting, fly-fishing, tubing and kayaking on the Gold Medal Waters of the Animas River. One of the best fly fishing destinations in Colorado, the Animas River is one of the easiest and best places to get some fishing in with minimal effort. Home to both rainbow and brown trout, the Animas has produced state-record fish. Spend an afternoon fly fishing in this beautiful location, or explore the backcountry to catch that next huge rainbow trout.

With the addition of [Lake Nighthorse](#) in 2018, visitors can enjoy boating, fishing, swimming and picnicking within just a few miles of downtown Durango and the Animas River. Situated in Ridges Basin surrounded by mountains and ridgelines with dramatic cream-colored cliffs, Lake Nighthorse blends Durango's picturesque scenery with magnificent multi-sport recreational opportunities. Pedal kayaks, SUPs, canoes and fishing gear available. Colorado's newest lake is an extremely significant cultural area decades in the making.

There are hundreds of archaeological sites around the lake, including pit houses, camps, other habitation sites, and even human burial grounds. Some date back to 6500 B.C., but the most revealing sites provided unprecedented insight into the village dynamics of the Pueblo I people, who inhabited the region around 700 to 900 A.D. Visit the [Southern Ute Museum](#) or the [Center for Southwest Studies](#) at Fort Lewis College to gain an understanding of the ancient peoples of the region, and the importance of preserving these cultural resources.

[Vallecito Lake](#) and Lemon Reservoir are stunning mountain lakes, located just 40 minutes from Durango. Visitors can enjoy swimming, fishing, boating, waterskiing, wakeboarding, standup paddle boarding, and dining at Vallecito Lake.



World-Class Skiing and Year-Round Family Fun

Located just 25 miles north of Durango and surrounded by the majestic San Juan Mountains, **Purgatory Resort** is the destination for an authentic Colorado mountain experience. The Village Plaza base area features a vibrant assemblage of family friendly activities, lodging, retail shops, restaurants and bars. During winter Purgatory offers affordable lift tickets, few crowds and miles of varied terrain and scenic trails. In the summer, Purgatory provides hiking and lift-served mountain biking, plus over a dozen family friendly activities, including the area's only Alpine Slide and Mountain Inferno Coaster. Please visit purgatoryresort.com to learn more.

New for the 2018/19 season, all kids ages 10 and under ski for free with the Power Kids Pass. Purgatory Resort continues to up the ante with nine new trails (101 trails total), seven terrain parks and 1,605 skiable acres. With 12 chairlifts and rarely any lines, skiers enjoy steep gladed trees, wide-open cruisers and everything in between amidst the spectacular scenery of the rugged San Juan Mountains. Other winter activities include dog sledding, tubing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, horse-drawn sleigh rides, backcountry skiing, snowmobiling and more.

Available year round, the **new Inferno Mountain Coaster** is a family friendly thrill ride with incredible mountain vistas. At nearly 1 mile long (4,000 feet), the Inferno features a 300 foot-vertical drop, nine switchbacks and one loop. Riders have full control of the brakes and speeds up to 25 mph, so it's easy to choose the pace of your adventure. In the summer months, Purgatory provides an exciting zipline, alpine slide, summer tubing, scenic and mountain bike chairlift rides, hiking and mountain bike trails, bungee trampolines, disc golf, UTVs, and paddle boarding. Purgatory is also known for producing a wide array of signature events and festivals throughout the summer.

Home to Durango's only lift-served downhill flow trail, **Purgatory's Bike Park** features trails for all ability levels and a bull schedule of pro-level races, clinics, and new trails for all levels. Visit the [Bike Trail Report](#) tab for other open trails, and [Trails 2000](#) for over 400 miles of singletrack and backcountry trails around Purgatory and Durango.



Incorporated in 1881, Durango was founded by the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. The narrow gauge railway extension connects the towns of Durango and Silverton, and has traveled the same route continuously for over 130 years. A National Historic District, downtown Durango overflows with historic hotels, restaurants, art galleries and boutiques. The rugged San Juan Mountains offer spectacular scenery and hundreds of miles of world-class single-track and hiking trails.

Nestled in southwestern Colorado's Animas River Valley and surrounded by rugged peaks, Durango's remote location offers unimpeded access to some of the best cultural, historic and outdoor attractions in Colorado. From outdoor pursuits in the surrounding high desert and mountains, to fresh food raised at high-elevation farms, Native American history and Old West heritage, Durango is Southwest Colorado's premier four-season destination, attracting more than 1.4 million visitors annually.

The Durango Area Tourism Office is a not-for-profit organization operating with the mission to promote Durango and La Plata County's multitude of tourism attractions, events and services. Please visit www.durango.org for more information.

About Visit Durango

Nestled in southwestern Colorado's Animas River Valley and surrounded by rugged peaks, Durango is home to some of the best outdoor, historic and cultural attractions in the state. Board the historic 1880's D&SNG Railroad for breathtaking views and old-world atmosphere, or visit archeological wonders and ancient cave dwellings at nearby UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Downtown Durango's National Historic District overflows with historic hotels, award winning restaurants, breweries, art galleries, museums, and boutiques. The rugged San Juan National Forest offers hundreds of miles of world-class mountain biking, hiking, rock climbing, and skiing, plus fishing and boating on the Gold Medal Waters of the Animas River. North of Durango, Purgatory Resort features 92 trails, five terrain parks and 1,360 skiable acres.

Durango is easily accessible by US Hwy 550 from the north and south, US Hwy 160 from the east and west, and the Durango-La Plata County Airport. Visit Durango.org to learn more and follow @visitdurango on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest.